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10/727,027	12/02/2003	Andrew Christian Dahlgren	758.1421USUI	4454
23552	7590	03/06/2006	EXAMINER	
MERCHANT & GOULD PC P.O. BOX 2903 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-0903			PARSONS, THOMAS H	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1745	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 02/22234 in view of Applicants' Specification as evidenced by Donaldson Product Guidelines and Specification.

Claim 1: WO 02/22234 in Figure 1 discloses a fuel cell assembly comprising:

(a) a portable fuel cell having a cathode in fluid connection with an oxidant intake port and an anode (page 2, lines 11-19);

(b) a filter assembly positioned in fluid connection with the oxidant intake port and the cathode, the filter assembly comprising: (i) at least one of a particulate removal feature and a chemical adsorbent feature; and

(c) the filter assembly constructed and configured in the fuel cell so that oxidant, entering via the intake port, passes through the filter assembly, (page 2, line 30 through page 3, line 11; page 16, lines 1-32, see also page 4, line 15 through page 15, line 30).

WO 02/22234 does not disclose a filter assembly further comprising a water buffer feature constructed and configured so that water vapor, from the cathode, is managed by the water buffer feature to achieve a desired humidity level.

Art Unit: 1745

The Applicants on page 18, line 22 through page 19, line 5 disclose a commercially available filter assembly comprising a particulate removal, chemical adsorbent, and a water buffer feature constructed and configured so that water vapor, from the cathode, is managed by the water buffer feature to achieve a desired humidity level. See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have substituted the filter assembly with the filter assembly of the Applicants' specification because both are concerned with filtering particulates and gases from incoming air, and the Applicants teach a commercially available filter assembly that would have provided protection from particulates, hydrocarbons, acid gases, and the effects of water vapor such as condensation and corrosion, and would have controlled humidity thereby improving the overall performance, efficiency and life of the fuel cell.

Claim 2: The rejection is as set forth above in claim 1 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses that the filter assembly comprises both the particulate removal feature and the chemical adsorbent feature (page 18, line 22 through page 19). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Claim 3: The rejection of claim 3 is as set forth above in claims 1 and 2 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses a filter assembly comprising one portion having the particulate removal feature, the chemical adsorbent feature and the water buffer feature therein (page 18, line 22 through page 19). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Art Unit: 1745

Claim 4: The rejection of claim 4 is as set forth above in claims 1-3 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses a filter assembly comprising a housing, with the particulate removal feature, the chemical adsorbent feature and the water buffer feature retained in the housing (page 18, line 22 through page 19). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Claim 5: The rejection of claim 5 is as set forth above in claim 1-4 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses a housing defining at least a portion of a diffusion channel (page 18, line 22 through page 19). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Claim 6: The rejection of claim 6 is as set forth above in claims 1-2 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses a filter assembly comprises one portion having the particulate removal feature (filter membrane) and a second portion having the chemical adsorbent feature (adsorbent tablet) and the water buffer feature (diffusion channel) therein (page 18, line 22 through page 19). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Claim 7: The rejection of claim 7 is as set forth above in claim 1 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses that the particulate removal feature is a membrane (filter membrane) (page 18, line 22 through page 19). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Claim 8: The rejection of claim 8 is as set forth above in claims 1 and 7 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses that the membrane is PTFE (page 18, line 22 through page 19). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Art Unit: 1745

Claim 9: The rejection of claim 9 is as set forth above in claims 1 and 7 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses that the membrane is PVDF (page 9, line 3 through lines 20). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Claim 10: The rejection of claim 10 is as set forth above in claim 1 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses a chemical adsorbent feature comprising activated carbon (page 18, line 22 through page 19). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Claim 11: The rejection of claim 11 is as set forth above in claims 1 and 10 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses that the chemical adsorbent feature comprises impregnated activated carbon (page 18, line 22 through page 19). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Claim 12: WO 02/22234 on page 1, lines 11-19 discloses that the fuel cell is operably connected to electronic equipment to provide power to the electronic equipment.

Claim 13: WO 02/22234 on page 1, lines 11-19 discloses that the electronic equipment is one of a cell phone, personal computing device, or a lap top computer.

Claim 14: WO 02/22234 discloses a fuel cell operably connected to an electronic equipment (e.g. a cell phone) which is that same as that instantly defined as a portable fuel cell. Accordingly, the portable fuel cell of the WO combination would have a weight of no greater than 2 kg.

3. Claims 15-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Herdeg et al. (6,403,243) in view of Applicants' specification.

Claim 15: Herdeg et al. in Figure 1 disclose a fuel cell assembly comprising:

Art Unit: 1745

(a) a portable (i.e. mobile as per col. 4: 50-54), direct methanol fuel cell (abstract and col. 2: 54-58) comprising:

(i) a cathode (col. 1: 17-48);

(ii) an anode (col. 1: 17-48); and

(iii) a liquid methanol source (fuel tank) in fluid contact with the anode, the methanol retained in a compartment having a vent, the vent providing fluid contact (via line 21) between an interior of the compartment and an exterior of the compartment; and

(b) a filter assembly positioned with the vent (via line 21), the filter assembly configured for fluid connection between the interior of the compartment and the exterior of the compartment (col. 2: 39-43 and col. 5: 42-47).

Herdeg et al. do not disclose a filter assembly within a vent and comprising a selectively permeable hydrophobic and/or oleophobic feature.

The Applicants on page 18, line 5 through 20 and page 20, lines 4-5 disclose a commercially available filter assembly disposed within a vent and comprising a selectively permeable hydrophobic and/or oleophobic feature (PTFE). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Assembly (ABA).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have substituted the filter assembly with the filter assembly of the Applicants' specification because both are concerned with filtering particulates and gases from incoming air, and the Applicants teach a commercially available filter assembly that would have provided protection from particulates, hydrocarbons, acid gases, and the effects of water vapor

Art Unit: 1745

such as condensation and corrosion, and would have controlled humidity thereby improving the overall performance, efficiency and life of the fuel cell.

Claim 16: The rejection of claim 16 is as set forth above in claim 15 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses that the selectively permeable hydrophobic and/or oleophobic feature is a membrane (PTFE membrane) (page 18, line 5 through 20 and page 20, lines 4-5). See also See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Filter (ABF).

Claim 17: The rejection of claim 17 is as set forth above in claims 15 and 16 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses that the membrane is PTFE (page 18, line 5 through 20 and page 20, lines 4-5). See also See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Filter (ABF).

Claim 18: The rejection of claim 18 is as set forth above in claims 15 and 16 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses that the membrane is PVDF (page 9, line 3 through lines 20). See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Filter (ABF).

Claim 19: The rejection of claim 19 is as set forth above in claim 15 wherein the Applicants' specification further discloses that the filter assembly further comprises an adsorbent feature (page 18, line 5 through 20 and page 20, lines 4-5). See also See also Product Guidelines & Specifications Adsorbent Breather Filter (ABF).

Claim 20: The rejection of claim 20 is as set forth above in claim 15 wherein Herdeg et al. disclose a fuel cell operably connected to mobile equipment, which has been construed as a portable fuel cell that obviously would have a weight of no greater than 2 kg.

Art Unit: 1745

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas H. Parsons whose telephone number is (571) 272-1290. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:00-4:30) First Friday Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Pat Ryan can be reached on (571) 272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Thomas H Parsons
Examiner
Art Unit 1745


PATRICK JOSEPH RYAN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER